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Stefan Everts - Suzuki



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RETURNING HOME

Story Geoff Meyer Images Redeye/Gary Freeman

When Stefan Everts started his quest to take over the Suzuki Factory team he knew he wanted it to be done properly. The greatest Grand Prix rider of all time was venturing into something very special to his heart. Not just a change in jobs like many of us, but a return to his first ever job. Can you imagine going back where it all started? But not as that young teenager, but as one of the most decorated competitors in the sport he once saw as a little boy as his father Harry dominated on his RM 125.





Pit Beirer once told me a story of being a little boy walking the pits and stopping by the HRC team truck. In front of him where the bikes of Dave Thorpe, Eric Geboers and Andre Malherbe. For Beirer it was a moment he will never forget; and as sports director of the biggest team in the MXGP paddock that early experience helped him make sure the team developed to the highest level.

For Stefan Everts the colour yellow has been in his blood since he was a baby. Back in 1972 when Everts was born his father was travelling the world with other Suzuki legends such as Roger De Coster and Joël Robert. The move by Everts is truly of a boy coming home and as we mentioned, Stefan Everts doesn't do things by halves.

So that brings us to the photo shoot that helped officially release the news to the world. Only one photographer was going to be at that shoot and that was Stefan's long-time friend Gary Freeman and his media company 'Redeye'. Freeman and Everts have a special bond and the British photographer has done some pretty epic photoshoots with Everts over the years and was also asked to shoot 'The King's' wedding a handful of years ago. Gary Freeman takes us through the photo-shoot and gives us an insight on how important it was for Stefan Everts and his team.

Motocross Illustrated: Gary, how did the photo shoot come about?

Freeman: I guess it came about as a result working with Stefan for many years. When I look back at the photo shoots I've done with Stefan, like when we put him in a lake in his race kit, or him with Sébastien Tortelli on the wings of a Boeing 747. We also did a shoot in an



exclusive members' club in Brussels. Stefan was always positive, easy to get hold of, and uncomplicated for photo-shoots. And I think he enjoyed something different. This time around he wanted something exclusive for his Suzuki press release.

Motocross Illustrated: Stefan is well known for his passion and knowledge of the history of the sport. Did you feel how important this was for him when you arrived in Belgium to do the shoot?

Freeman: Yes, definitely. In advance of arriving he said, "Gary, this has to be the best photoshoot ever" - so no pressure. We both knew though you can't predict anything like that because there are other factors such as the October weather that could ruin our hopes. But we both had the intention of working very hard to produce an interesting collection of images. It's really up to other people to decide if they like the shots or not. We just tried to do what was right given the time constraints, weather, locations, logistics etc. etc. Photos are always silent and don't tell the story of the effort needed and barriers to overcome in order to achieve them.

Motocross Illustrated: What you see in Stefan is a passion for the sport that just doesn't go with his racing career. He grew up in this sport and he just doesn't seem to waver.

Freeman: You mentioned Stefan's passion for the sport; it does amaze me that that fire doesn't burn out. I think the fire to race has burnt out, although I know he wanted to race at the MXoN at Ernée after he saw that crowd. So the fire to race GP motocross isn't burning, but the passion





to win as a team manager is now his new focus. And who would want to line up against a 10 time World Champion? Yes, the other teams did this when Stefan was with KTM, but now he has more control of key decisions I think he'll more even more effective. He won two MX2 titles whilst in charge of the KTM MX2 operation, so I guess we should expect more with Suzuki. It may take a little time, but I think it'll come.

Motocross Illustrated: Was there much pressure? You had the elements of it being winter for the action shots and also the time frame you had for so much work to be done.

Freeman: I think with regard to this photoshoot there were times when I felt the pressure, because I had free-reign to do what I thought was right – given what we had to work with. And those decisions (on occasions) have to be made very quickly, but once you've committed to a decision it's hard to change once you've invested time into the setting up of a shot, so there's pressure to make the right choice. I had a very wide-ranging brief that covered portraits, workshop, action, lifestyle, formal, informal etc – and this takes a big effort. Managing the equipment alone is a hell of a task. Knowing how to use it to best effect is another. I think Stefan trusts me and he knows I'm not going to shoot anything that isn't cool – although that's subjective too! Trying to please everyone all the time in life is pretty unrealistic and yeah I did feel the pressure sometimes but tried to find the right balance between creativity and the commercial side of what's needed.

Motocross Illustrated: What did you enjoy most about the shoot?

Freeman: I actually think I enjoyed the riding the most. Everything we did we didn't have that long. Although it lasted two and a half days, we had a lot to do.









It was late October in Europe and the days are short and the skies are generally grey with a weak sun and a lot of golden colours going on in the background. The whole riding part of the shoot was in fact on this one sandy mound. I think he also started to enjoy it because he could see the images on the back of the camera. Those images were created in about an hour of riding. I did enjoy the action - just Stefan Everts play riding. Stefan was happy and he even said to me it's nice that we can end up with these images in such a short amount of time.

Motocross Illustrated: How was it working with him in Belgium, because he isn't just any old guy in his home country is he?

Freeman: Of course over the years of knowing Stefan (and I know you will realise this and you've said it before Geoff), but we just see him as Stefan. But in Belgium you can't go anywhere without people wanting to do selfies with him - and there was one lady that came into the restaurant where we were shooting and she was like, "WOW! Stefan!?" She couldn't believe it. To you and me it's just Stefan, a nice guy and down to earth. But to Belgian people he is still "The King".

Motocross Illustrated: Did he enjoy the shoot? Or was he just happy to get it out of the way? I imagine he must be flat out with organizing things at the moment.

Freeman: You can tell he is spinning a lot of plates now and in all fairness he probably didn't have time for the photo shoot - but he made time. And every evening after the shoot he was asked to help out at a charity 'this or that' or attend an official function. He must have been exhausted. I think the photo he enjoyed most was the images with those massive steel shapes with his 1991 RM125. He was shocked what could be achieved with some lighting. He also enjoyed the riding, but you know he is 43 now and it's hard on the body and it is physically demanding riding the 450 like that and you could tell he'd had a work out by the time we finished, but still an astonishing rider, making it look so easy - when it's not easy at all!

Motocross Illustrated: It sounds like

you had to rush around a little with time restraints. What was the most difficult thing in that?

Freeman: Well, even trying to keep up with him walking was a challenge! He's driven and motivated by a force that seems to propel him ahead. I didn't have an assistant and we tried to set up a sort of mini studio everywhere we went - with a van full to the roof with kit. Stefan helped out a lot. Hard to explain how hard that is to manage photo-kit, but yes it was difficult and the more kit employed at a location, the longer it takes to manage and use well.

Motocross Illustrated: I imagine the relationship with Sylvain and Stefan is pretty special. They have known each other since Stefan's birth. Could you see that respect?

Freeman: Yes, I could see the respect they both have for each other and see that maybe this partnership is what's needed. I think it'll be the calmness of Sylvain and the fire of Stefan, that'll probably work really well. Power is nothing without control and Stefan's energy probably needs to be fired in the right direction I think - and I think Sylvain will help. Stefan has some nice ideas and I think we might see a bit of a change in the Suzuki team truck at the races in 2016.

Motocross Illustrated: I know you also respect Stefan as a person and must have enjoyed the whole experience. What stood out for you in the two and a half days?

Freeman: The thing about Stefan, he is driven and really busy, but he is also a nice guy. Geoff, you'll remember that I came to your place after the shoot. I'd finished the last photo with Stefan and we had been together for two and a half days. He asked me what my plans were, and I said I am going to see Geoff in Holland, but he said should first come by the house to chill, so we had some lunch with the family and friends and watched Liam riding - and I can see the pride in his eyes that Stefan has for his kids. Just winding down; and it proves again what a nice person and family they are - just chilling together. We all work hard; and sometimes it feels like we live to work, but chilling like that reminds us that we work to live. And even 'The King' needs a break. I wish them all the best and hope to see some GP success soon. It'll come.





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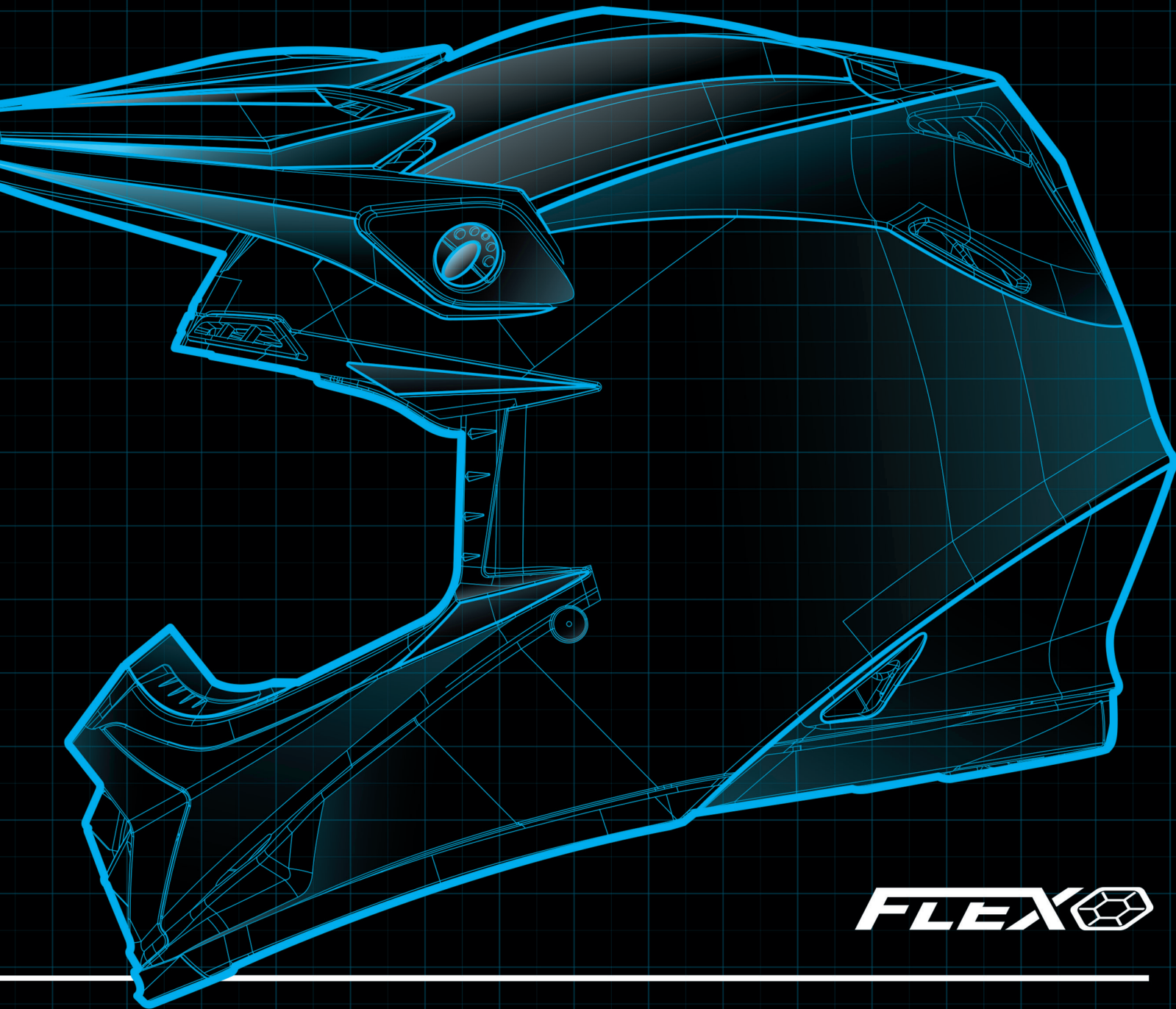
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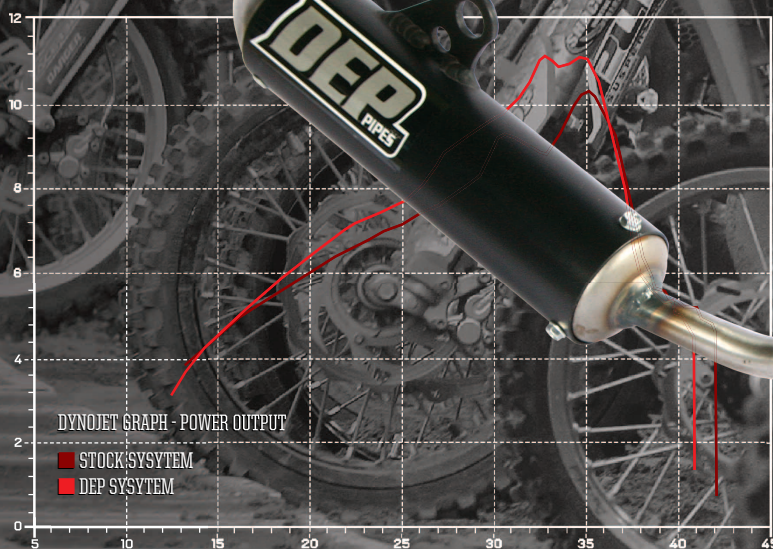
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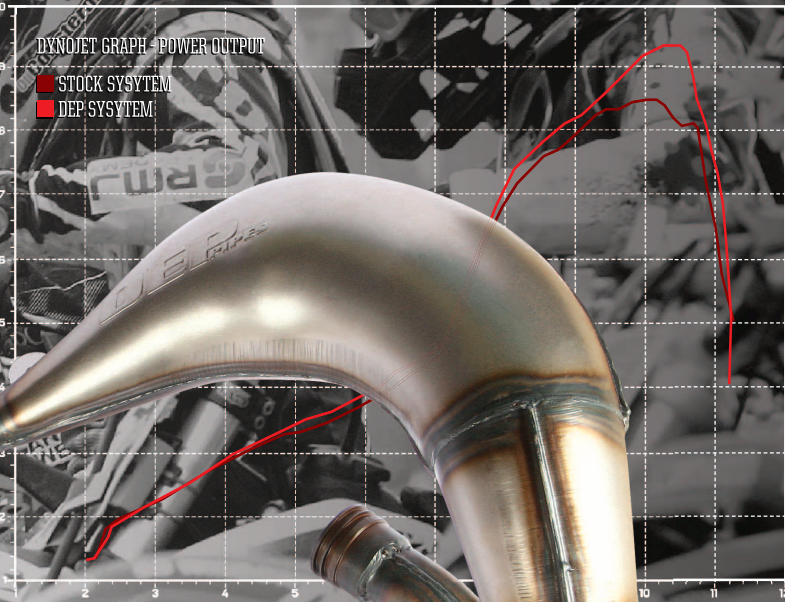


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THE SHOW MUST GO

Story Geoff Meyer Images Ray Archer

There can be no doubt last weekend's Lille Supercross was a big event, still the biggest Supercross race in Europe despite being a shadow of its former self (the Bercy Supercross). The organizers of this event always put in 100% to make sure it remains that way and that the public have a reason to come back. Due to the terrorist attacks in Paris the event nearly didn't go ahead, but local officials gave it the green light and the thousands of fans who had bought tickets get to see some good racing.





We had a photographer and two journalist all set to visit the event and make a good coverage, but having heard the news Saturday morning about what had happened in Paris we decided the risk was too great. The fact the Supercross was one of the very few major sporting events being run on the weekend, due to most being cancelled, and the fact American athletes would be involved I didn't want any of our staff to be put in that situation. Call it chicken, but in my opinion it was the only option at the time.

David Bulmer a British journalist who works for Vurbmoto in America has probably visited more races in 2016 than any other media and his feeling around the event was one of doubt.

"I've been to a lot of races these past few years but Lille SX at the weekend was probably one of the strangest on record. Obviously a massive black cloud was hanging over the country after events that transpired in Paris late on Friday night and to be honest I woke up on Saturday morning expecting an announcement regarding its cancellation."

"Even after seeing their Facebook post saying the event would continue for as long as possible, I wasn't exactly hopeful that things wouldn't get shutdown before any meaningful races took place. Speaking with promoter Eric Peronnard during the practice sessions and he said that the decision was out of the hands of the race organizers and the fate of the race would instead be decided by local government/authorities. With Disneyland closing, and all

major events around France shutting down, he said that if it took place, this would be the biggest organized event in the entire country."

Winner on Saturday of the first night in Lille, American Weston Peick became the new 'King of Lille' after scoring a second position on the Saturday night program behind Frenchman Christophe Pourcel.

With a win on Friday and a second position on Saturday, Peick won the overall classification, with Christophe Pourcel (3/1) second and Cooper Webb (2/5) third. Swiss Valentin Guillod was the best Euro rider with another fourth position in the main, and France won the Nations classification.

"The first night it was a crazy race," Peick said. "The track was rutted out and I had a bad start on Saturday and crashed and then the nearly crashed in my semi. Sunday was ok, but not really that great and I was happy to get the King of Lille trophy. I was just glad to come out of the weekend safe and head home."

A rider who is becoming more popular with ever rider Cooper Webb held it together at times, but also spent a lot of time on the ground.

"Friday night wasn't bad, but it wasn't good either. I won my heat race which was nice and had an ok main event, I was battling Stewart and I got onto Pourcel and then I made a weird mistake and I crashed. It was a pretty bad crash and I bent the bike. I got up and I think I got fifth. Third overall for the weekend,





but I was pissed off because I figured I could have won it."

World MXGP champion Romain Febvre really performed well under tough conditions. Having not raced Supercross and very little preparation he did the best he could with what he had.

"I was pumped to finish safe and I got fifth and seventh. It was difficult to learn and the whoops are really difficult. It's hard with the 450 and I only had four days of training and going into the whoops with speed is scary. I learnt all weekend and I was much better on the Sunday. I will do Bercy again in 2016 and we have some International races, but for sure we are not really into Supercross."

French favorite Christophe Pourcel as always impressed with a win on Saturday night and a crashed riddled night on Friday.

"Saturday I did well, but the track was really soft and it made the whoops difficult. I ended up third in my heat, but I just wanted to get to the main. Weston crashed in front of me in the heat, and I ended third, but it was nice to be in the group and I was happy with the set-up of the bike. I was on the outside on the main and I was riding well at the back, but then Cooper crashed. It was really good to win the second night and I want to thank Husqvarna for making it happen."

French local Maxime Desprey won for the second time the 'Prince of Lille' title, and France beats USA in the Nations classification. Forty thousand spectators enjoyed





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both days of the event, and on Sunday the Stadium sang the Marseillaise in memory of the Parisian tragedy.

Winner of his heat race and the main event on Saturday, Peick had more troubles Saturday as he had to qualify for the main through the last chance after crashing in the heat race. With a bad pick gate his start in the main was not so great, but the American came back in second position behind Christophe Pourcel who led the entire race. Both Cooper Webb and Malcom Stewart crashed while pushing behind the Frenchman, losing all chances of podium; they also helped Peick to come back second on the podium, between Pourcel and Fabien Izoird.

Friday Night – Results

Results SX2. Race 1: 1.Desprey (Kawasaki); 2.Do (Honda); 3.Irsuti (Yamaha); 4.Snayei (USA, Kawasaki); 5.Richier (Yamaha)

Race 2: 1.Richier; 2.Desprey; 3.Do; 4.Irsuti; 5.Sallefranque (Honda)

Overall first night: 1.Desprey; 2.Do; 3.Richier; 4.Irsuti; 5.Sallefranque

Results SX1. First semifinal: 1.Peick (USA, Yamaha); 2.Pourcel (Husqvarna); 3.Ferandis (Kawasaki); 4.Guillod (SUI, Yamaha); 5.Simpson (GBR, KTM)

Second semifinal: 1.Stewart Malcom (USA, Honda); 2.Webb (USA, Yamaha); 3.Stewart James (USA, Suzuki); 4.Soubeyras (Yamaha); 5.Izoird (Suzuki)

Last chance: 1.Martin (Kawasaki); 2.Rombaut (KTM); 3.Febvre (Yamaha); 4.Teillet (Honda)

Super pole: 1.Stewart James, 38"848; 2.Pourcel, 39"114;





3.Stewart Malcom, 39"545;
4.Ferrandis, 39"561; 5.Webb,
39"919

Main event: 1.Peick ; 2.Webb ;
3.Pourcel ; 4.Guillod ; 5.Soubey-
ras ; 6.Febvre ; 7.Izoird ; 8.Martin
; 9.Simpson ; 10.Rombaut

Results SX2. Finale 1: 1.Desprey
(Kawasaki); 2.Hsu (ALL, Suzuki);
3.Richier (Yamaha); 4.Verhaeg-
he (Kawasaki); 5.Do (Honda)

Finale 2: 1.Richier; 2.Desprey; 3.Do;
4.Sanayei (USA, Kawasaki); 5.Hsu

Overall Friday: 1.Desprey; 2.Richier;
3.Hsu; 4.Do; 5.Verhaeghe

Prince of Lille : 1.Desprey, 6 points
; 2.Richier, 10 ; 3.Do, 13 ; 4.Irsuti
(Yamaha), 28 ; 5.Sallefranque (Hon-
da), 30

Saturday Night - Results

Results SX1. Semi Finale 1: 1.Stewart
Malcom (USA, Honda); 2.Ferran-
dis (Kawasaki); 3.Febvre (Yamaha);
4.Teillet (Honda); 5.Aubin (Suzuki)

Semi Finale 2: 1.Webb (USA, Ya-
maha); 2.Soubeyras (Yamaha);
3.Pourcel (Husqvarna); 4.Simpson
(GBR, KTM); 5.Izoird (Honda)

Last chance: 1.Peick (USA, Yamaha);
2.Guillod (SUI, Yamaha); 3.Rombaut
(KTM); 4.Coulon (Kawasaki)

Super pole: 1.Pourcel, 37"877;
2.Ferrandis, 38"657; 3.Stewart Mal-
com, 38"990; 4.Simpson, 39"398;
5.Webb, 39"425

Main event : 1. Pourcel ; 2.Peick
; 3.Izoird ; 4.Guillod ; 5.Webb ;
6.Soubeyras ; 7.Febvre ; 8.Rombaut ;
9.Ramette ; 10.Ferrandis

King of Lille : 1.Peick, 3 pts ;
2.Pourcel, 4 ; 3.Webb, 7 ; 4.Guillod,
8 ; 5.Izoird, 10 ; 6.Soubeyras, 11 ;
7.Febvre, 13 ; 8.Rombaut, 18 ; 9.Fer-
randis, 23 ; 10.Stewart Malcom, 23

Nations classification: 1.France, 24
points; 2.USA, 35.



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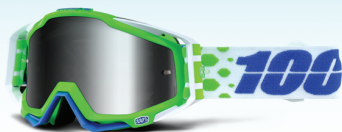
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AMA vs FIM

Story Geoff Meyer images Takuro Nagami

International action between riders from the FIM Motocross World Championships and the AMA Nationals is always the best competition there is. It doesn't matter if a rider is visiting American from the GP series, the USGP, the annual MXoN, or one off events like the Japanese Motocross Championship. AMA vs FIM locking horns is the best against the best and around a month ago that is what happened in Sugo, Japan.

While it was Trey Canard who took the victory the stories of the big three (Canard, Cooper Webb and Romain Febvre) made the event what it was. It nearly didn't matter who won, as long as there were fights for the wins, and that is what they got in Japan late in October of 2015.

Here is what the big three thought of the weekend.

Canard: It was great, I was happy to practice well, and a little disappointed I crashed in the first moto, but a great race with Romain Febvre in the second moto and that was fun. The track was good, a little tighter than American tracks, but it was really rough and bumpy. In the first moto I lost the front and tipped over. On this tracks you couldn't really push hard, I was probably riding 90%, but on the last lap I was 100%, because he (Febvre) was coming. I really wanted to come out of here healthy.

Canard: I loved Japan, the people are amazing, really happy and joyful. I really enjoyed the culture and the rice foods were great, some of the meat I had a difficult time with. The chicken is different, for us we have more white meat. I had some squid and octopus and that was different. The fans were so nice to me and I hope to come back some day."

Webb: It was good, the first moto was really good, Trey and I had a good battle going, then he crashed and I rode well to win the moto. Second moto I had a good start, but made some mistakes in the first part of the race and then crashed. I tried to catch them and I made a big mistakes and tried to catch them, and with the rain it was dangerous and I just rode conservative and safe. They had a good race though.

Webb: The second time being in Japan was more enjoyable





and I met a lot of people last year and it seemed like I was able to get to know more people and know some places and know what was going on. Last year was a huge shock. It was good to know the race format, but also know the good sightseeing places and what the good food to eat is.

Webb: Sunday night we tried and eat normal, but prior to the race we went to a great place with Yamaha and I had some barracuda fish and some sushi, we had a famous soup, I can't remember the name, and all types of great stuff. Green tea was also nice.

Webb: The spectators are awesome as usual. Last year they were great but this year it was even better. They are so polite and give us presents, they love that we come to this race and that feels pretty awesome to be so welcomed. Sometimes in the USA some fans are not so cool, many are nice, but in Japan everyone is nice.

Webb: We (Febvre and Webb) didn't race each other too much, more Trey and I battling. I was able to beat Febvre twice in Japan, which was good because he beat me every single time at the MXoN. We battled at the USGP, at the MXoN and now in Japan and next we battle at Lille, so it's cool. It was nice to win a moto on Sunday to beat those two, wish I could have done it on the second moto, but it doesn't always go your way.





Febvre: It was good I had a lot of fun, just the riding the first moto wasn't great. I crashed on the first corner and it wasn't difficult to come back, but when I got into third they (Canard and Webb) were already gone and I had to accept third place. In the second moto I had a better start and I had a good battle with Canard and I was happy with my riding.

Febvre: It is my first time to Japan, it is a lot different to Europe and the food isn't what I am used to and I don't like sea food, so it wasn't easy, but I still had fun. I think a lot of fans were cheering for us and that is important and after the race we did a lap and the crowd really liked it. I think it would be nice if we did that at the GPs, it would be nice for the fans.

Febvre: It was good with Cooper, we had a good battle at the USGP and the MXoN. He won the first moto and I was ahead of him and it was good, he is a good ride and really fast, I hope to have more races with him next year and hope I win again.

Febvre: Having a good battle with Trey and my moto's were good, so my speed isn't too bad. I was well prepared. We had a good battle in that second moto and some places he was fast and some places I was faster. I tried my best, I did some moves with two laps to go I passed him, but he passed me back and I wasn't aggressive enough. I was a little disappointed with that, but it was just a fun race, it isn't a championship and today (Monday) we did some more testing.





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A close-up, low-angle shot of a motocross rider's face and helmet. The rider is wearing a blue and black helmet with a white star-shaped graphic on the side. The rider's face is partially visible, showing a focused expression. The background is dark and out of focus, with a red and white striped object visible in the lower right corner.

Jeffrey Herlings

DECISION MAKING

Story Geoff Meyer images Ray Archer

Two times World MX2 champion Jeffrey Herlings is a rider with as much pressure on as any other rider going into the 2016 season. It is still unknown what class the Flying Dutchman will race next year. Many hope he moves up to the MXGP class to battle the other former world motocross champions in Antonio Cairoli, Romain Febvre, Jordi Tixier, Tim Gajser, David Philippaerts and Ben Townley.

Having suffered terrible injuries in the last 24 months Herlings would be excused for staying in the MX2 class. He hasn't won a world title for two years and despite being considered the future of the MXGP class, his brittle body needs a year to recover before he moves up to the big boy class.

Motocross Illustrated: Jeffrey, how do you look back on your career until now?

Herlings: I have had a great career up until now, and every career has its ups and downs. I had loads of wins the last two years, but obviously no championships through injury. Life goes on. Hopefully we will put ourselves in a better position and we need to stay out of the injury zone. Everything is going well and we hope to be back on the bike in four weeks and I am super, super motivated and I hope we can get a good winter preparation in and come into 2016 really firing.

Motocross Illustrated: 2015 saw two riders rise to the top of the MXGP series, Romain Febvre and Tim Gajser. What did you think of the season, watching the last part from the sidelines?

Herlings: I was to be the guy who would break all records of Stefan Everts with his 10 world championships and try and break his 101 GP wins. I was 19 years old and had over 40 GP wins, two world championship and working on my third and then everything went wrong. It all broke into pieces. Knowing what I am capable of and knowing what I have already done, and then seeing guys like Gajser winning a world title. When I missed Germany I had a 140 lead or something and to lose two world titles with such big leads was really tough. It is crazy how you can lose two championships with such big points leads. It hurts seeing Febvre winning and Gajser winning and I am just sitting on the couch at home.

Motocross Illustrated: I guess injuries are all part of it?

Herlings: That's sport, you are as





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good as your last race and when you are winning everything is good, but when you are not racing it's tough, but that is the way it is. To come from winning 27 GPs in a row in 2013 and 20014 and winning championships and now being where I am, it is nearly depressing, but it would be a lot worse and of course it could also be a lot better. I learnt a lot mentally and I just want to be back on the bike, it makes me happy and at the moment I am not a happy person.

Motocross Illustrated: Next year you might move up to the MXGP class?

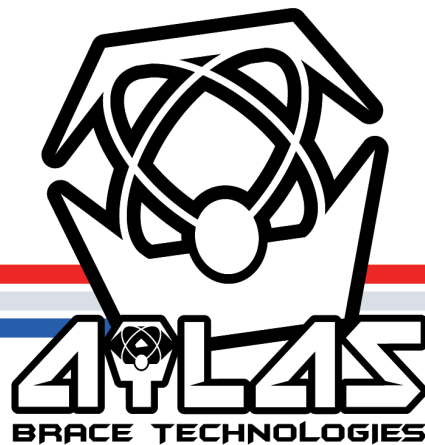
Herlings: I am waiting to see what the doctor says when I can start riding again, and I will see when I get the green light. I will start on my 250 because I haven't ridden for like six months, but then we will do some testing with the other bike, and what we are going to do and see what falls into place. I give it a 50% chance of one or the other at the moment. I have a lot to prove in MXGP, but I also have something to prove in MX2. I didn't finish a season in the MX2 class the last two years and I want to show what I can do on that bike. I want to show I am capable of winning that third MX2 championship, but I am also wanting to show I can beat those guy in MXGP also. It will be a hard decision, but whatever decision I make it will be a good decision.

Motocross Illustrated: MXGP is where the best are isn't it?

Herlings: Definitely, that is the class, it's F1 or motoGP and all the best are in that class, Tixier is moving up, Gajser, and the class also has Febvre, Van Horebeek, Cairoli, Desalle, Coldenhoff all the top guys are in that class, but I also have to prove something to myself and I have years to race MXGP, I hope my career is until I am 30 or something. I just want to be pain free when I get on the bike, but the decision which class I race might be







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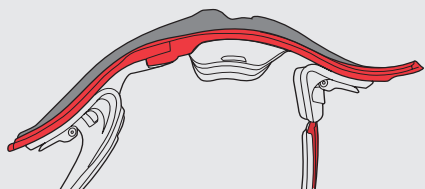
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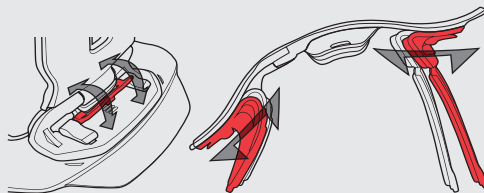
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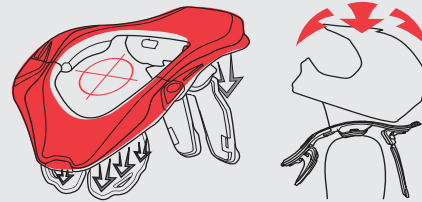
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Tim Gajser

MOVING UP

Story Geoff Meyer Images Takuro Nagami

The FIM world MX2 champion Tim Gajser of the Gariboldi Honda team isn't a rider hanging around waiting for more success to come to him. Despite being just 19 years old the young HRC rider is looking at taking the next step in a career that has rocketed him to a 65cc European Championship in 2007, the 85cc European Champion in 2009, a junior 125cc World championship and EMX 125cc championship in 2012, and the world mx2 championship in 2015.

Now he is going for the big one, the greatest prize in world motocross the MXGP championship in 2016. Yes, at just 19 years of age the Slovenian rider is moving up with the big boys. The move to the 450cc class means he won't be taking the dive into AMA Supercross in 2016, instead concentrating on what will be a huge challenge in the FIM Motocross World Championships.

We were lucky enough to get hold of Tim and ask him about the move and what it means to the HRC set-up and his own team the Gariboldi Honda team. Gajser will have full factory 450cc machines under the Gariboldi team truck.

Motocross Illustrated: Tim, this is really exciting news for the Motocross World. How excited are you about moving up?

Gajser: It is amazing, actually I prefer to ride the 450, I really like the bike, I like riding it and I am always training and practicing with the 450 so I am really excited for next year.

Motocross Illustrated: Of course nobody expected you to win a world motocross title this year, not even yourself probably, but with that MX2 title out of the way when did you decide to make the move to the MXGP class?

Gajser: Like you said, we didn't expect to win a world championship, and I am still a little bit surprised, but I am happy we are the champion. We talked about it before the season started, and in fact we always said when I win the MX2 championship we will move

up, so we now go for the 450 class. Many, many good riders I think around 15 riders who can win, so it will be exciting for everyone who watches.

Motocross Illustrated: You mentioned in our last interview a months ago that you would go to Japan, test both the 250 and 450 and see which one you wanted to ride in 2016. Did that testing take place? It seems like you already had made your mind up before Japan?

Gajser: You know, we made some testing on the 450 and we are already preparing for next season, and we have a lot of time to work on it and the whole team is excited to move to the 450 class and see what happens.

Motocross Illustrated: Looking at Romain Febvre this year and seeing his progress in the MXGP class, which must give you and all the MX2 riders some motivation to follow his path?

Gajser: For sure, Romain (Febvre) had an amazing season, and nobody could have expected him to win the championship in his rookie season. It was surprising and for sure it gives motivation. I think in the MX2 class there are many talented riders, and when the other rookies switch to MXGP they do ok and it shows also how good the MX2 class is.

Motocross Illustrated: I can't imagine you are even thinking about trying Supercross in America now in 2016. The job at hand would be to be really well prepared for the MXGP class. Or not?









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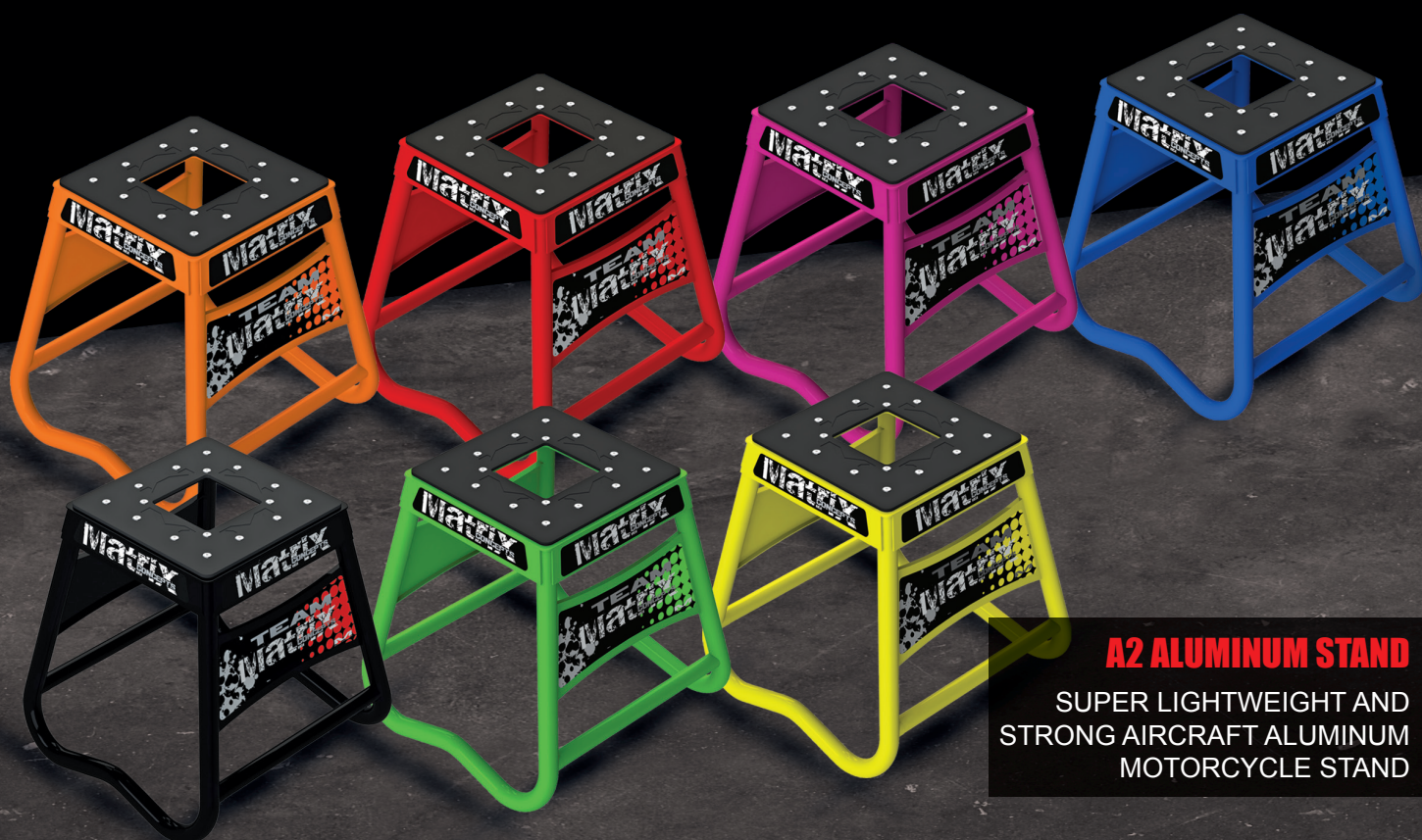
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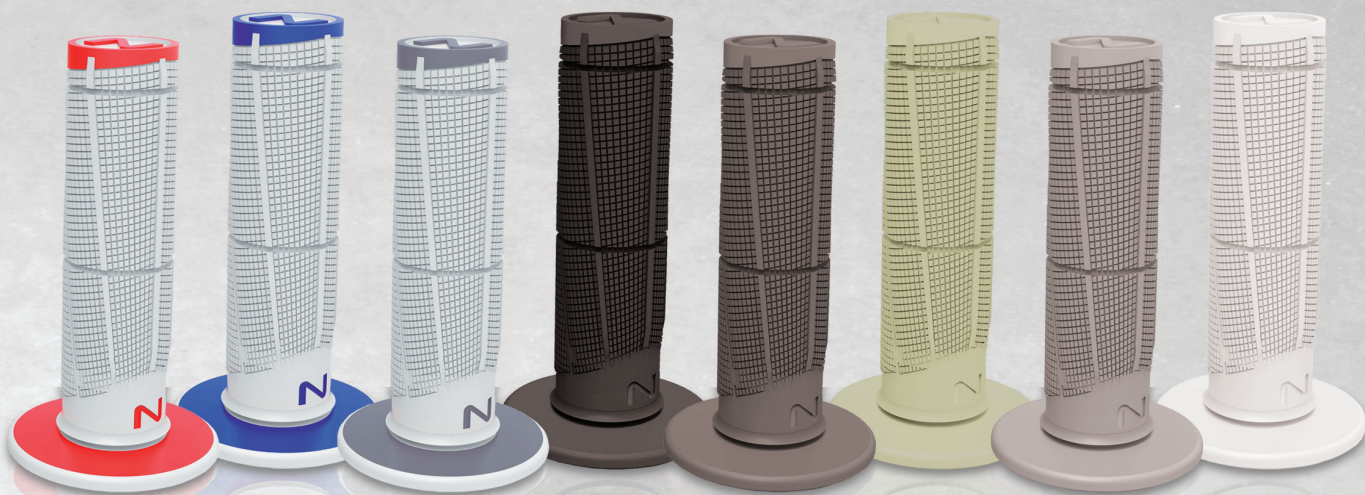
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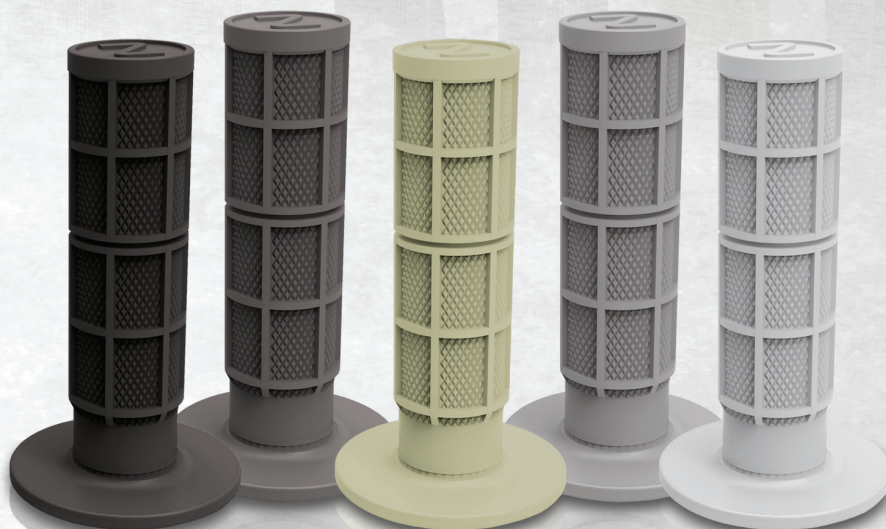
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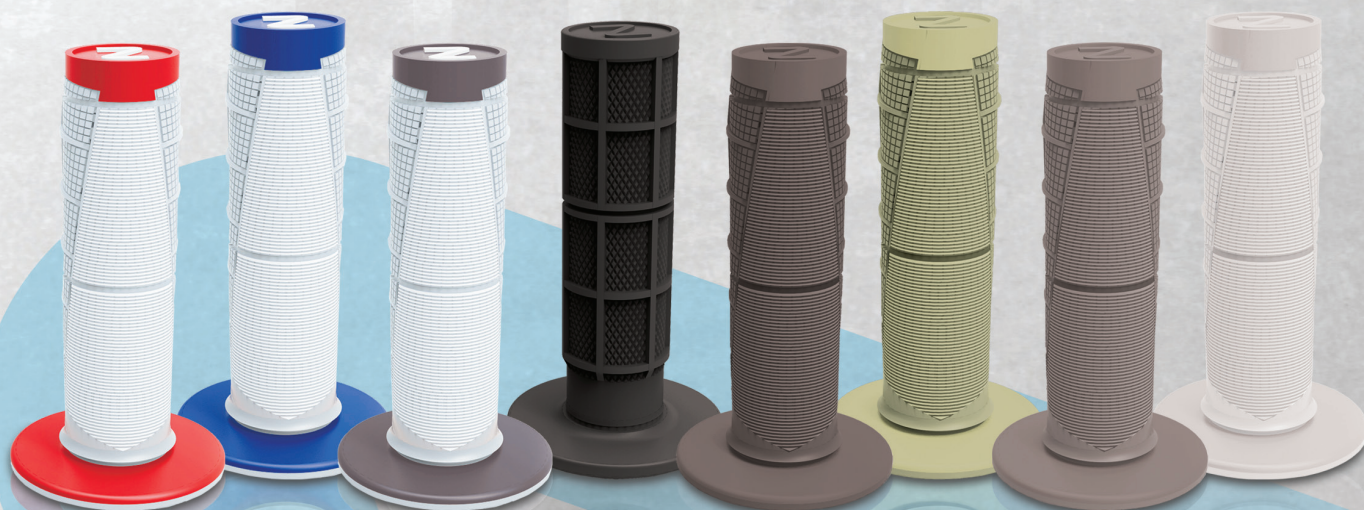
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